

**South Dakota National Guard
Public Affairs Office
2823 West Main St.
Rapid City, S.D. 57702**

**Phone 605-737-6721
E-mail PAO@sd.ngb.army.mil**

**February 6, 2009
PAO 09-02-06**

MEDIA ALERT:

Unclaimed WWII Veteran's remains to be buried at National Cemetery

By Maj. Brendan Murphy
SDNG Public Affairs Officer

STURGIS, S.D. – For 32 years, the unclaimed ashes of a South Dakota veteran rested peacefully on the shelf of an Aberdeen funeral home – waiting for a dignified burial.

Next week, the cremated remains of that long-time Aberdeen resident, Leonard L. Sloan, will be interred with full military honors at the Black Hills National Cemetery near Sturgis. Burial for the World War II veteran will be at 1:00 p.m. MDT on Monday, Feb. 9.

“This is a great honor to lay him to rest in a national shrine,” said Sara Elton, director of the Black Hills National Cemetery.

The discovery was made after a determined search headed by John Moisan (MOY'-suhn), special projects coordinator for Governor Mike Rounds. Moisan, who had watched a “Missing in America Project” video presentation, put out a statewide inquiry to search for unclaimed, cremated remains of South Dakota veterans.

One such query reached Shriver’s Memorial Mortuary and Crematory in Aberdeen, S.D., revealing that Sloan’s unclaimed remains had been tucked away for more than three decades.

Last month, Moisan’s efforts produced another veteran’s unclaimed remains at McColley’s Chapel of the Hills in Hot Springs, S.D. Verlin L. Cavier (CAV'-ee-ur) of Wagner was a corporal during the Korean War and occupation of Japan. His remains were buried January 30 at the Black Hills National Cemetery. No family members were present.

“I really feel good about our effort to finally provide these veterans with an honorable burial,” said Moisan. “Yet at the same time, I’m sad that it has taken all these years to put them to rest.”

In Aberdeen, an archived obituary shows that Sloan was born at Ipswich, S.D., in 1910 and worked many years as a pressman for the Aberdeen American News Co. His wife, Margaret, also worked at the newspaper.

An 18-year-old Sloan enlisted in the National Guard at Aberdeen on January 24, 1928, as a member of Battery A, 147th Field Artillery. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1939 and served on active duty from November 1940 to January 1946 in the Pacific campaign.

Dell Griffin, former American News editor, said the pressroom had a tight-knit group of veterans who served together in WWII with Battery A.

“I’m sure they could tell you a lot more about Lenny,” Griffin said. “But quite honestly, I’m shocked to find out that he has not been laid to rest after all these years.”

While in combat, Sloan moved through the ranks and became a major in 1944. He went on to serve as commander of Battery A and was the commander of the 260th Field Artillery Battalion for about a month before the unit was disbanded at the end of the war. Sloan resigned from the National Guard in December 1947.

“I was really humbled when we found proof that Maj. Sloan was a member of our very own South Dakota Guard family,” said Bob Sack, military and funeral honors coordinator for state’s Army National Guard. “His service to our country should be honored.”

Sloan retired from his civilian job in 1972 and died on July 17, 1977.

According to funeral documents, Sloan was married to Margaret Birch in 1945 and had one son, Lyle, who was listed at the time as living in Livermore, Calif., and one daughter, Elizabeth, who lived then in New Brighton, Minn. Also listed at the time of his death was a sister, Helen, who married Wes Jeffrey of Ipswich, and three surviving brothers, John of Hot Springs, William of Aberdeen, and Merl of Torrance, Calif.

All efforts to contact Sloan’s and Cavier’s families over the years have been unsuccessful.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact Maj. Brendan Murphy at (605) 737-6721 or cell (605) 431-8753, or e-mail brendan.murphy1@us.army.mil.

Photo captions:



20090210-A-9937D-001: Sergeant 1st Class Eric Christopherson of the South Dakota National Guard's Military Funeral Honors Team, renders a salute to the remains of Maj. Leonard L. Sloan on Monday, Feb. 9, at the Black Hills National Cemetery. Sloan, a member of Battery A, 147th Field Artillery, South Dakota Army National Guard, and a World War II veteran who died in 1977, was finally laid to rest 32 years after his death. His remains were discovered after a statewide inquiry to search for unclaimed, cremated remains of South Dakota veterans.

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/20090210-A-9937D-001.JPG>



20090210-A-9937D-002: Sergeant 1st Class Eric Christopherson of the South Dakota National Guard's Military Funeral Honors Team, presents Larry Simonson of Rapid City, and Patrick Lewellen of Spearfish, with an American flag for the service of Maj. Leonard L. Sloan on Monday, Feb. 9, at the Black Hills National Cemetery. Simonson stood in place of his friend and collage classmate Lansing Sloan of Livermore, Calif., who is the son of Leonard Sloan. Sloan, a member of Battery A, 147th Field Artillery, South Dakota Army National Guard, and a World War II veteran who died in 1977, was finally laid to rest 32 years after his death. His remains were discovered after a statewide inquiry to search for unclaimed, cremated remains of South Dakota veterans.

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/20090210-A-9937D-002.JPG>



20090210-A-9937D-003: Major Brendan Murphy of the South Dakota National Guard, pays his respects to the remains of Maj. Leonard L. Sloan who was laid to rest on Monday, Feb. 9, at the Black Hills National Cemetery, as cemetery staff bury the WWII veteran. Sloan, a member of Battery A, 147th Field Artillery, South Dakota Army National Guard, who died in 1977, was finally buried 32 years after his death. His remains were discovered after a statewide inquiry to search for unclaimed, cremated remains of South Dakota veterans.

Link to photo: <https://sdguard.ngb.army.mil/released/20090210-A-9937D-003.JPG>